



Alliance



## National Consultation on **Plant-based Local Food Systems for Health and Nutrition**

**October 22, 2021**

### Organizers

Alliance of Bioversity International and  
International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), New Delhi

Indian Society for Plant Genetic Resources (ISPGR), New Delhi

International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics  
(ICRISAT), Hyderabad

Trust for Advancement of Agricultural Sciences (TAAS), New Delhi

*Video of proceedings will feature  
as a side event during the*

November 15-18, 2021



**2<sup>nd</sup> International  
Agrobiodiversity  
Congress**

[www.eatgrowsave.org](http://www.eatgrowsave.org)

# Background



- COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to being an unprecedented health crisis, has brought to the forefront vulnerability of our society to food insecurity affecting both social and economic dimensions with far-reaching consequences. Health co-morbidities, shortage of food owing to lockdowns as well as shutdown of transport have brought spotlight on local foods systems that are good for health and nutrition security.
  - Food systems should provide the consumers:
    - (i) adequate amount of food, both affordable and accessible; (ii) adequate quality and quantity of macro and micronutrients for good health; (iii) enjoyable, satisfying diets to fulfil cultural needs; and (iv) food produced using sustainable cultivation practices, ensuring future generations to continue producing food locally and at lesser costs.
- India is bestowed with diverse agro-ecosystems and rich agrobiodiversity. However, major manifestations of agrobiodiversity - cultural, culinary and curative - and consequently the locally adapted food systems are under threat, including indigenous knowledge. Unfortunately, at present, only three crops - rice, maize and wheat - meet nearly 60% of calories required by humans from plant-based food system globally.
- Covid-19 has highlighted the fragility of such a uniform food basket, stereotyped food habits and homogenous production and supply chain. Food habits, cultivation and market must, therefore, go back to recognizing the importance of local food systems. However, this requires identifying the core areas of correction, innovation and implementation as well as charting a new sustainable path of action.
- The need to shift spotlight from production/ productivity to nutritional security and associated health benefits also now been acknowledged globally. The 2019 'State of the World's Children Report' by UNICEF reveals how a triple burden of under nutrition, micronutrient deficiency, and obesity seriously threatens development of children and economies. Further, the 2018 'Global Nutrition Report' by WHO revealed that India is projected to lose 46 billion USD just on account of malnutrition by 2030. As per Global Health Index by IFPRI, India stands 96<sup>th</sup> out of 107 countries as 40% of children below 5 years are undernourished.
- The 'State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World, 2021' has a tagline "Transforming food systems for food security, improved nutrition and affordable healthy diets for all". On the same lines, the Government of India report, 'Food and Nutrition Security Analysis, India, 2019' shows that despite rapid economic growth, declining levels of poverty, enough food even to export, and a multiplicity of government programs, malnutrition amongst the poorest shall remain a high priority to be addressed by the Government.
- Policy focus on crop diversification also demands a robust value chain with components like processing facilities closer to the farm gate; and collectivising small farms to offset scale disadvantages through cooperatives, FPOs, etc. Digital agriculture tools will play a major role with increasing participation of the private sector.
- Investments in research and innovation will play a key role in achieving the goal of sustainable and nutritious food systems by way of developing suitable crop varieties with desired traits like yield, climate-resilience and nutritional qualities.





- Out of 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted in 2015, goals of no poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being for people, and responsible consumption and production directly address household food, nutrition and health security. The National Agricultural Research and Education System in India must, therefore, reinvent and realign on-going programs to achieve SDGs while laying greater emphasis on local food systems.
- While malnutrition burden of India continues to be a daunting challenge, the dietary patterns are changing with rising levels of household incomes resulting in increased obesity. Both the dimensions should, therefore, be kept in mind while designing policies and programs aiming at transition towards sustainable, nutritious, resilient and inclusive local food systems.

## Context

India has witnessed, concomitant to economic development, greater dependence on a few cereals in diets and agricultural production systems, thus resulting in a declining intake of native foods in cuisines that are healthy like millets, pulses, fruits and vegetables. As rightly pointed out by the Global Panel on Agriculture and Food Systems for Nutrition, poor diet is the world's number one health risk (27%). Post Covid-19 devastation, wise societies and governments aim to build sustainability into country's agricultural system while producing those foods that are good in quality from a nutritional and health perspective. Need of the hour is to reform India's food systems if we intend to nourish our populace with high quality diets and at the same time protect the environment.

Addressing the food systems challenge is going to be multi-disciplinary, multi-modal and multi-layered. However, the action has to begin right now by charting a path with immediate, medium-term and long-term goals. Despite a multitude of public funded programs to address nutrition and health, our progress appears to be unconnected and not advancing at the pace or scale required. Reforming the food systems is going to be more complex and rather difficult task requiring a clear strategy for "*A Decade of Action*". It must aim at accelerating sustainable solutions - ranging from crop priorities, cropping systems, traditional cuisine, healthy foods, post-harvest technologies, value chain and the economics.

To precisely address the issues related to plant-based local food systems, the Alliance of Bioversity International and International Center for Tropical Agriculture and the Indian Society of Plant Genetic Resources in collaboration with International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics, and Trust for Advancement of Agricultural Sciences propose to organise a National Consultation on "Plant-based Local Food Systems for Health and Nutrition" on October 22, 2021. The event is supported by the UN-Environment Implemented GEF project coordinated by the Alliance of Bioversity International & CIAT. In This virtual event will be a part of the 2nd International Agrobiodiversity Congress, November 15-18, 2021 ([www.eatgrowsave.org](http://www.eatgrowsave.org)). The overall aim of the consultation will be to identify options and prepare action plan for achieving, through plant-based local food systems, '**Nutrition and Health for all by 2030**'.

# Objectives

- To assess possible options to make our food systems healthy, nutritious, balanced and sustainable
- To identify opportunities to create diverse value chains that can promote greater use of our plant-based local food systems
- To identify players and action points for intensifying research on plant-based local food systems

## Expected Outputs

- Possible options for higher production and increased consumption of healthy and nutritious local foods
- Policy framework developed for enhanced investments for research and development on priority local food systems – A decade of action

## Structure of the Consultation

**Duration:** Three hours virtual meeting. The entire proceedings will be recorded and uploaded on the website of 2<sup>nd</sup> International Agrobiodiversity Congress ([www.eatgrowsave.org](http://www.eatgrowsave.org)) to be held in Rome from 15 - 18 November 2021. Hence, participants of the Congress will benefit from the deliberations and outcome of this national consultation.

**Structure:** Inaugural Session to set the context followed by presentations by the eminent experts (invited) and a panel discussion involving experts and stakeholders (including researchers, policy makers, farmers, community representatives, private industry, NGOs, etc.)

**Date:** October 22, 2021 (Friday)

**Time:** 14.00 - 17.00 IST (GMT +5.30)

### Core Organizing Committee



**P.N. Mathur**  
(*Convener*)

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# National Consultation on Plant-based Local Food Systems for Health and Nutrition

October 22, 2021 (Virtual Mode\*)

## PROGRAM

### I. Inaugural Session

(14.00-14.35 IST)

Chair: **R.S. Paroda**, President, ISPGR & Chairman, TAAS

Chief Guest: **T. Mohapatra**, Secretary, Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE) & Director General (DG), Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)

Guest of Honour: **Juan Lucas Restrepo**, DG, Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT

Moderator: **Bhag Mal**, Secretary, TAAS

14.00 – 14.04	Welcome and Context of the Consultation	<b>Anuradha Agrawal</b> , General Secretary, ISPGR
14.04 – 14.11	Address by Guest of Honour	<b>Juan Lucas Restrepo</b> , DG, Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT
14.11 – 14.18	Address by Guest of Honour	<b>Jacqueline d'Arros Hughes</b> , Director General, ICRISAT
14.18 – 14.28	Address by Chief Guest	<b>T. Mohapatra</b> , Secretary, DARE & DG, ICAR
14.28 – 14.35	Remarks by Chairperson Chairman, TAAS	<b>R.S. Paroda</b> , President, ISPGR and Chairman, TAAS

### II. Thematic Presentations

(14.35-16.05 IST)

#### Status and Strategies for the Future of Local Food Systems

Co-Chairs: **P. L. Gautam**, Former Chairman, National Biodiversity Authority & Protection of Plant Variety and Farmers' Rights Authority  
**A. K. Singh**, Deputy Director General (Horticultural Science), ICAR

Moderator: **Prem Mathur**, Consultant, Kirkhouse Trust and UNDP

14.35 – 14.50	Millets and other Nutri-cereals	<b>V.A. Tonapi</b> , Director, ICAR-Indian Institute of Millets Research
14.50 – 15.05	Major and Minor Legumes	<b>N.P. Singh</b> , Director, ICAR-Indian Institute of Pulses Research
15.05 – 15.20	Fruits and Vegetables	<b>B.N.S. Murthy</b> , Director, ICAR-Indian Institute of Horticultural Research
15.20 – 15.35	Spices and Medicinal Plants	<b>S.N. Saxena</b> , Director, ICAR-National Research Centre on Seed Spices
15.35 – 15.50	Plant-based Nutrition Security	<b>R. Hemalatha</b> , Director, ICMR-National Institute of Nutrition
15.50 – 16.05	Discussion and Concluding Remarks by Co-Chairs	

## III. Panel Discussion

(16.05-17.00 IST)

Co-Chairs: **R.S. Paroda**, President, ISPGR & Chairman, TAAS and **Stephan Weise**, Managing Director, Asia, Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT

Moderator: **Sunil Archak**, Editor-in-Chief, ISPGR

16.05 – 16.11	<b>Ashok Kumar</b> , Director, ICAR-NBPGR, New Delhi
16.11 – 16.17	<b>Bharat Kakate</b> , President & Managing Trustee, Bharatiya Agro Industries Foundation (BAIF), Pune
16.17 – 16.23	<b>Prakash Tyagi</b> , Executive Director, Grameen Vikas Vigyan Samiti (GRAVIS), Jodhpur
16.23 – 16.29	<b>Atul Jain</b> , General Secretary, Deendayal Research Institute (DRI), Chitrakoot
16.29 – 16.35	<b>Rajeev Varshney</b> , Research Program Director - Accelerating Crop Improvement, ICRISAT, Hyderabad
16.35 – 16.41	<b>J.C. Rana</b> , Country Representative, India Office, Alliance of Bioversity International & CIAT, New Delhi
16.41 – 16.47	<b>G.V. Ramanjaneyulu</b> , Executive Director, Centre for Sustainable Agriculture (CSA), Hyderabad
16.47 – 16.57	Discussion and Concluding Remarks by Co-Chairs
16.57 – 17.00	Vote of Thanks by <b>Sonal Dsouza</b> , Alliance of Bioversity International & CIAT, New Delhi

*\*Please join virtual meeting using zoom link:*

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82655440905?pwd=U256MDZSUTRFRTVzdmVTYzdJNFkydz09>

Meeting ID: 826 5544 0905

Passcode: 248459

